

In Time

by Jason

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Summary: Having absolute power would corrupt anyone... even Jake. (A rewrite of frrosty's fic.)

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[A/N: This fic is a rewrite of frrosty's fic, "In Time." She came up with the plot, the concept, and wrote the original version - I liked it so much that I couldn't resist asking her if I could rewrite it. And so I did. Oh, and yes, Jake is definitely out-of-character. But that's the point, really; because this story is about how power corrupts. And, yeah, Tobi is still a birdie in this one. He was a bird in the original, he's a bird here. R/T got married anyway. ^_^ Enjoy.]

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Jake's lips curled into a feral smile as he looked down from his enormous, ornately carved throne at the tall, dark-haired young man that knelt before him. Aximili stood behind Jake, at his right, an unreadable expression on his face.

"They will be dead within the hour," the young man promised. "I will see to it personally, Milord."

"Good," Jake said. "Kill them. Kill the Animorphs."

* * * * *

Marco ran down the dark, narrow hallway, his footsteps echoing through the corridor. He'd somehow been separated from the rest, and now he was lost.

His eyes darted about nervously, looking for danger. If... _Stop that_, he commanded himself fiercely. _Stop thinking about that. You have to find the others so you can get out of here. Paranoia will get

you nowhere._

He'd been wandering the halls for what seemed like hours, and he'd gotten even more lost. "You and your big mouth, Marco," he berated himself silently. "Look what you've gotten yourself into."

Just then, he heard a sound. He froze. _It's nothing,_ he told himself. _Just a rat. Or your feverish imagination..._

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His thoughts came to an abrupt halt as a phalanx of guards burst into the corridor. Marco turned to run, to escape, but, a second later, came the "Tseew!" of a Dracon Beam.

Marco fell to his knees, then collapsed to his side in a pool of his own blood. His breathing slowed, and finally stopped as he slumped over, dead.

One of the guards pulled out a handheld communicator. "This is Captain Smith," he said. "We have killed one of them. Marco is dead, Milord."

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Prince Jake, is this... wise? Aximili said cautiously from Jake's side. We could cancel the order now, and call the others back. It was all merely a misunderstanding.

Jake turned to Ax. "Why would I want to do that, Ax?"

But, sir- Ax started, but stopped as Jake shot him a venomous glare. Who was killed, Prince Jake?

Jake shrugged. "I don't know, they didn't tell me. You don't... _agree... with them, do you Ax?"

Of course not, sir, Aximili responded.

"Then this discussion is meaningless."

Aximili sighed and lowered his stalk eyes sadly. Yes, sir.

* * * * *

"Where could he have gone?" Cassie wondered. "He was there one minute... then the next minute, he was gone."

"Don't worry, Cass," Rachel said assuredly. "We'll find him."

But, of course, Rachel knew that the chances were slim. They all did. It could take them days to reach the lower floors of this monolithic structure. Add the fact that they were being pursued by trained squadrons that knew their way around and were well armed, and it was very unlikely that they could escape.

Don't you know where the exits are? Tobias asked. I mean, you've been living here for the last five years. Surely-

"I never came down here, Tobias. I never did like this place."

Oh.

* * * * *

The Yeerks had long since been defeated, nearly twenty years ago. Once the world learned of the Yeerk invasion, they quickly organized a massive military power. Jake had been given command of the army, and victory had come swiftly.

The Andalites never had come. Ax had not heard word from them for almost two decades. Some thought that they might have been conquered by Yeerks, destroyed in war, or simply never bothered to rescue them. Jake didn't care one way or another, and never attempted to contact them.

The Earth's economy collapsed shortly after the war's end, and the world entered a depression. After the defeat of the Yeerks, Jake and Cassie had gotten married. Jake was, in the next several years, elected leader of the United States.

Aximili, who had been Jake's second-in-command throughout the war, retained that position even after the Yeerks had been defeated.

Fifteen years beforehand, Jake had ordered his palace built, soon after declaring himself ruler of Earth. It had taken ten years to build and was, without a doubt, regarded as the greatest man-made structure on the planet. It had been placed directly over the site of where the White House had once stood in Washington, D.C.

In the beginning, he'd been a figurehead, and little more. But that changed quickly, and Jake swiftly ordered the destruction of all that opposed him. Five years after his elections, rebel factions began uprising, but were systematically destroyed.

As Jake become more of a public figure, the other Animorphs faded quietly into the background, which suited them perfectly. They didn't want the spotlight, anyway. Rachel and Tobias had gotten married three years after the end of the war, and had been living in California for the past eight years. Marco, once Jake's best friend, lived in Washington but rarely spoke to him.

War had broken out between European rebels and Jake's army. Jake had ordered their destruction. Throughout all this, the other Animorphs had suddenly received invitations to Washington, to see Jake and Cassie. They had all agreed, and been flown in to meet him.

* * * * *

"Couldn't we morph?" Rachel asked.

"No, Jake had Gleet BioFilters installed a few years back." Cassie laughed bitterly. "He's become quite paranoid in the last couple of years." _Who knows what else he could have hidden in here without telling me,_ she added silently.

* * * * *

On their third week in Jake's palace, he had decided to hold a

ceremony in their honor. It had been a huge, televised event.

Unfortunately, Marco had gotten into an argument with Jake.

"Jake, man, you're no better than Visser Three! You used to be my best friend, putting everyone before yourself! Now look at you! You've turned into a dictator!"

Jake's eyes had blazed angrily. "How dare you speak to me in that manner! I saved this country from economic ruin! Without me, this country - the world! - would be lost!" Jake motioned to his guards. "Dispose of him."

Cassie stood up and put her hand on Jake's shoulder. "Jake..."

"Shut up, Cassie," Jake snapped, knocking her hand away.

"Jake, are you CRAZY?!" Rachel cried in disbelief.

Jake glared. "Take them all away!"

* * * * *

Fortunately, Cassie had come to the rescue. They were forced to escape down to the lower floors, but had soon gotten lost. Then Marco had disappeared.

Tobias cocked his head. Did you guys hear something? he wondered.

Cassie frowned. "No."

Tobias paused. Maybe I'm hearing things.

Rachel looked uneasy. "I doubt it."

Further down the hall, they suddenly heard loud voices.

"There they are!"

Rachel spun around, only to be Draconed repeatedly. She spun around and toppled to the floor, dead.

Tobias let out an anguished scream. RACHEL! NOO!

His words were cut short as the Dracon Beam pierced his chest and he fell to the ground in a flurry of blood and feathers.

Cassie gritted her teeth and stared defiantly at the guards. They promptly shot her down.

Three heroes, whom had helped to liberate mankind, lay slain on the ground in a pool of their own blood. Slain, at the order of the very person that had, at one time, been their firend.

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Jake stared into the darkness beyond his window, the faint light casting shadows on the contours of his face. Ax had retired to his

private quarters.

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Perhaps it was a rash decision, he thought. _Perhaps I had been wrong._

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Jake frowned and looked up at the night sky.

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No, of course not.

End
file.